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ABSTRACT

Two studies traced the social relationships from childhood to adulthood of family-attached and agemate-attached Japanese students. Study 1 aimed to clarify differences between the two types in their reports about social events and relationships in early childhood, elementary school, junior high, high school, and after. A total of 84 female college students completed the Affective Relationships Questionnaire (ARQ) and wrote life histories. Analysis of 15 personal histories indicated differences between the two relationship types. In study 2, a more rigorous methodology was used to replicate the first study. A Personal History Questionnaire was administered to 83 college sophomores who also completed the ARQ. The questionnaire was composed of 37 items covering all matters about which the two types of students had differed in the previous study. Students differed by type on 11 of the 37 items. Findings were consistent with results of Study 1. It is concluded that the subjects' retrospective histories of past relationships were consistently influenced by their present affective relationships. (RH)

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Personal History Differences between Family type and Agemate type Affective Relationships among Female College Students

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Our previous studies on the affective relationships, the core and relatively stable social relationships, have suggested that adults has a structural nature of framework of personal relationships in which some figure(s) are assigned a relatively more important roles as focus(foci) than other multiple affective figures. Though several kinds of affective relationships were identified, most of them were grouped into the two types: the family-attached type who selected the primary figure(s) only from the family; the agemate-attached type who chose only from agemate. The two present studies were aimed to investigate how the two types differently trace their social relationships from childhood to the present.

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Study 1

The first study aimed to trace the social experiences of the two types in their self-reported personal history, i.e., to make clear how they differently reported about social events and/or social relationships which occurred in five developmental periods: 1. early childhood; 2. elementary school; 3. junior high school; 4. high school; 5. the present.

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Method

Eighty-four female college students were tested affective relationships two or three times during a 6-month period by the Affective Relationships Questionnaire (ARQ). Independently, they were asked to write their own life histories spending at least two hours covering 113 items which concerned relations with parents, siblings, grandparents, peers or friends, and teachers, and also social adaptations in each of the five developmental periods. The average length of life histories was about 2,800 words. Ten of family type and five of agemate type subjects, judged to have the same one focus and/or two foci type through two out of the three measurements were selected for analyses.

Results

The fifteen personal histories were analyzed whether the subjects referred to each of the items positively or nagatively, or neglected it. As shown in Table 1, the two types of students spontaneously described their personal histories differently on some of past social lives. The agemate types reported significantly more that they had close friends in Periods 1, 4, and 5, and a lover/boy friend in Periods 4 and 5, and spent active and pleasant school lives in Periods 1 and 2. The family types wrote significantly more that they loved family members now.

Study 2

Study 2 was conducted to replicate the results of Study 1 by using a more objective and quantitative method.

Method

A Personal History Questionnaire (PHQ) was composed of 37 items covering all items about which the two type students described differently. Eighty-three college sophomores were given the ARQ and the PHQ with one week interval. Out of them 12 family type and 30 agemate type students were selected by the same criterion with Study 1.

Results

In Table 2, eleven items out of the total 37 of PHQ which were differently reported between the two type students were shown. The directions of significance were all the same with the results of Study 1.

Conclusion

The studies indicate that present affective relationships consistently affect in retrospectations of the past histories of relationships. These results propose the question to be addressed whether the differences written in the self-reported histories were really happened in the past, or whether they were just "colored" descriptions by the present relationships.

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Table 1

Positive Descriptions of Family type and Agemate type in Personal Histories

Items in Each Period	Family type	Agemate type	Difference
I In early childhood			
I was an active child.	1	5	**
I had many friends.	0	3	*
II In elementary school			
I was an active girl and took leadership in school.	1	5	**
I had many friends.	4	5	
I liked at least one of my teachers.	4	1	
III In junior high school			
I was an active girl and took leadership in school.	1	3	
I had many friends.	1	3	
I loved my family members.	7	1	
IV In high school			
I was an active girl and took leadership in school.	6	5	
I had close friends.	0	5	**
I had boy friends.	0	4	**
I loved my family members.	4	0	
I liked at least one of my teachers.	4	0	
V At the present			
I had close friends.	0	4	**
I had a lover.	0	4	**
I loved my family members.	8	0	*
Number of subjects	10	5	

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Table 2

Positive Descriptions of Family type and Agemate type in Personal History Questionnaire

Items in Each Period	Family type	Agemate type	Difference
I In early childhood			
I was an active child.	2	11	
I was willing to go to kindergarten.	2	17	**
II In elementary school			
I had boy friends.	8	27	*
I liked at least one of my teachers.	8	6	**
III In junior high school			
I was willing to go to school.	5	18	
I had boy friends.	7	21	
I had my first love.	6	27	**
I liked at least one of my teachers.	9	15	
IV In high school			
I was willing to go to school.	2	13	**
I had boy friends.	3	22	**
V At the present			
I had boy friends.	3	23	**
Number of subjects	12	30	

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$